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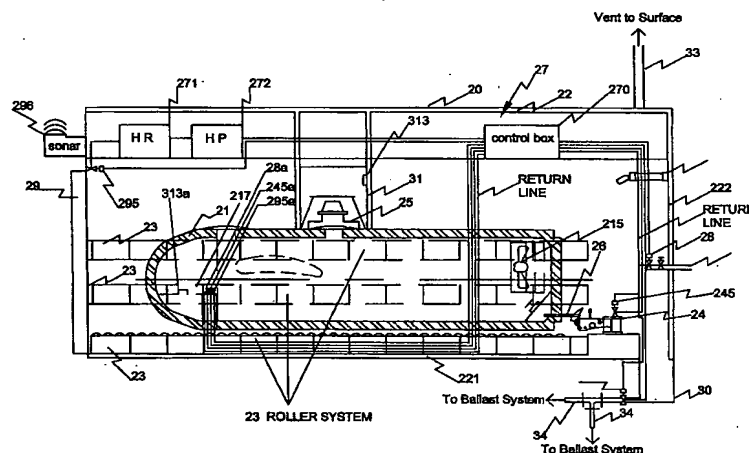
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(54) Title: SUBMARINE EMERGENCY EVACUATION SYSTEM



(57) Abstract: A system and a method for evacuating personnel from an offshore unit are described. The evacuation system comprises at least one submarine evacuation module attached to the offshore unit. A submarine evacuation module comprises a submarine for transporting personnel to be evacuated and a watertight submarine bay fixed to the offshore unit for holding the submarine, the bay having a door to permit the launch of the submarine from the bay. The evacuation module bay includes a control system, which may have hydraulic, electrical and mechanical systems, for flooding the submarine bay, for operating the door, and for decoupling a hook mechanism that couples the submarine to the submarine. The evacuation module bay may also include a roller system for cradling the submarine and guiding its movement into and out of the bay, and a sonar system for detecting obstructions near the bay door outside of the bay. The method of evacuating personnel from an offshore unit having a portion adapted to be submerged below the water level comprises having the personnel enter the submarine, flooding the bay, opening the door in the submarine bay and propelling the submarine from the bay to a predetermined location remote from the offshore unit.



— *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*

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